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Jackson, who sought to make the states the administrative centres they had been in 1800; the federal government withdrew from the field of internal improvements and threw upon the states—then supposed wealthy from the distribution of a mythical surplus—the burden of connecting the different portions of the Union; the States were not equal to the task, sold their public works to individuals and the consequence was the great enlargement of corporate activity, which has done more than anything else to extend the authority of the federal government.

It is not unreasonable to expect that a work dealing with this period would contain some reference to the nominating convention; that a constitutional historian and lawyer would have given us a description of the origin and development of one of the most powerful of extra-constitutional organs. But with the exception of a few sentences on page 208, referring to the congressional caucus, the author is silent upon the subject. In the chapters on the Missouri Compromise and the Dred Scott Decision, Professor Burgess gives us an excellent statement of the positions, and, indeed, where there is any occasion for an exercise of legal analysis he handles his material well. But with all this the book is a disappointing one. Indeed it is difficult to see how a short history of this period can be written until the great wealth of material which lies unused is made available. Only when the forces which were reflected in congressional debates are brought prominently before the rising hope of the South will the "chewing the bitter cud of fancied wrong" cease. Until then we shall continue to have books which are conventional, inadequate, and uninspiring.

JOHN L. STEWART.

Philadelphia.

Agricultural Depression in the United States. By W. A. COUTTS.
Pp. 96. Price, 50 cents. Publications of the Michigan Political
Science Association, April, 1897.

This monograph was written in competition for one of the prizes offered by Mr. David Lubin, of Sacramento, Cal., to the students of the Universities of Wisconsin, Minnesota, and Michigan, for the best essay on the agricultural depression in the United States. One of the conditions of the contest required that each competitor should discuss Mr. Lubin's scheme for a bounty on agricultural exports. Considered simply as a student's essay, Mr. Coutts' work has some merit. It shows fairness of mind, ability to think clearly, fair attainments in knowledge and the spirit of the careful investigator. But considered as a contribution to our knowledge of industrial

conditions it cannot take high rank. Mr. Coutts has attempted little more than an analysis of the elements of the agricultural situation and a summary of some of the surface facts and arguments which have a bearing upon it. In very few cases has he undertaken to go back of the secondary authorities and get at the bottom facts.

The problem he set for himself was twofold, to determine whether profits in the industry of agriculture were below those in other similar industries, and, if so, why? He answers the first question in the affirmative chiefly on the ground that agriculture is generally reputed to be depressed and that certain writers in magazine articles whom he quotes have proved to his satisfaction that rents in all the older sections of the country have universally declined. His answer to the second question seems to be that protection, inequitable taxation of real estate, foreign tariffs, the crisis of 1893 and the subsequent general industrial depression, and changes in our facilities for transportation have almost certainly contributed to the farmer's difficulties; that overproduction of agricultural staples is a probable and the appreciation of gold a possible cause of depression; and that farm mortgages have no bearing on the question except in so far as appreciation is a factor in the situation. On no one of these points has Mr. Coutts discussed all the pertinent facts, which other people have collected, or attempted to reveal any new facts. Whatever the reader may think of his reasoning,—and with some exceptions it is clear and tolerably convincing,—he can scarcely avoid a feeling of disappointment that the subject had not been handled in a different fashion.

Agriculture in the United States has too long been treated in a superficial and dilettante fashion by economic students, professors and historians. No one has yet published the results of a thorough and comprehensive investigation into our agricultural history and conditions, and consequently no one, as yet, knows much about them. It is high time that economic students in our great universities were set to work digging for facts in this important and attractive field. What we need is an accurate and detailed investigation into the economic history of the different agricultural sections of our country, an investigation which shall make scientific use of all possible sources of information, and which shall eventually reveal to us the actual facts regarding the changes and vicissitudes in the fortunes of farmers in all parts of the country. Until such investigations have been made and their results published no one will be able to answer with any satisfaction or profit the questions which Mr. Coutts has propounded in his monograph.

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